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Children and Politics by Fred I. Greenstein



No topic of political science has a longer and more distinguished lineage than citizenship training. From Plato to the present, political theorists have been concerned with the effects of the individual's childhood and adolescent experiences on his adult political behavior. Nevertheless, there has been virtually no research on what has lately come to be known as "political socialization," and this study, based on questionnaires and interviews of a sample of New Haven children, explores an almost untouched area.

What political ideas are held by children between the ages of nine and thirteen? From whom do their ideas come, and do they vary between boys and girls, between upper and lower socioeconomic classes? What is the relation of political development during this period to the person's later political participation? Mr. Greenstein adds perspective to his contemporary study by surveying changes in the content of children's political learning, and the different kinds of public figures they have chosen as exemplars over the past sixty years.

"The uniqueness of Greenstein's effort is that it is the first book-length empirical treatment of the political socialization of American elementary school children. . . . The author has wisely limited his efforts to a manageable domain. In doing so, he has added visibly to our understanding and has whetted our appetites for whatever future digging in this fertile ground may unearth." — *The American Political Science Review*

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